Amendments to the Claims:

1 - 9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) A method comprising the steps of:

storing in ~~an~~ a single instruction memory instructions for the handling of data transiting an interface device;

executing in a plurality of interface processors the instructions stored in the single instruction memory;

receiving a data flow inbound through an input port;

communicating the data flow through the plurality of interface processors; and

directing the data flow outbound through an output port in accordance with the execution of the instructions by the interface processors.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 10 further comprising parsing the data flow into a plurality of portions, storing selected portions of the parsed data flow in data memory, and directing other selected portions of the parsed data flow to a switching fabric for determination of an outbound direction.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 11 further comprising recombining the stored and other selected portions of the data flow prior to direction of the data flow outbound through an output port.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 10 wherein the step of communicating the data flow through the plurality of interface processors

comprises parsing the data flow into portions and distributing the parsed portions among the plurality of interface processors for handling in parallel.

14 - 42 (Canceled)

43. (New) A method according to claim 10 further comprising storing in a control processor control information including initialization and configuration data; and

forwarding stored information to selected ones of said plurality of interface processors.

44. (New) The method according to claim 43 wherein the control information is forwarded in a packet formatted with a protocol compatible for a network coupling the control processor and the interface processors.